

The Last Shot

By
FREDERICK PALMER

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays, Marta, daughter of the Browns, and her mother, Mrs. Lannan, are waiting for the arrival of the Gray army. Marta is a young girl of seventeen, and her mother is a woman of forty.

CHAPTER II.—Two years later. Marta, now a young woman of nineteen, is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER III.—Marta's mother dies. Marta is now alone. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER IV.—On the march with the Gray army, Marta is captured by the Browns. She is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER V.—Lannan calls on Marta at her home. He talks with her, and she tells him of her mother's death. He is now a school teacher, and his mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER VI.—Lannan shows Marta a letter from her mother. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER VII.—Marta and the Gray army are captured by the Browns. She is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER VIII.—At the frontier, the two armies are engaged in a battle. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER IX.—The Gray army crosses the border line and attacks the Browns. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER X.—Marta has her first glimpse of war in its modern, cold, scientific, and brutal form. She is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XI.—The Browns fall back to the Galland house. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XII.—The Browns attack in force. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XIII.—Marta asks Lannan over the secret telephone to appeal to Partow to stop the fighting. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XIV.—Marta and his staff occupy the Galland house. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XV.—Marta calls up Lannan on the secret telephone and with his assistance plans to give Westerling false information that will trap the Gray army. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XVI.—The Grays win. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XVII.—Bouchard is relieved as staff intelligence officer, and in going, accuses Marta. Westerling thinks him mad. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XVIII.—The Grays take the town of Engadine in an attack which is watched by Marta and Westerling, who is at first suspicious of her, but reassures himself. Partow dies suddenly and Lannan succeeds him. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XIX.—Westerling plans the main attack on Engadine. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XX.—The isolation and capture of the portion of an unsuccessful general are upon Westerling. In the midst of jubilation and plans to follow up his victory, Lannan finds the secret telephone wire cut. A saboteur of the Grays has discovered the wire, heard Marta's voice, and accused her before Westerling. He escapes from his now untenable headquarters and Marta is safe. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XXI.—Retreat and pursuit. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

CHAPTER XXII.—The Brown staff congratulate Marta. Lannan stops the pursuit and unfolds to the staff the final move in Partow's war plan. Westerling suicides. The Brown ministry receive a note from the staff advising them they will not pursue the Grays into their own country. The ministry is forced to accept the conditions and make peace. Marta wins the peace she worked for and Lannan wins her. Marta is now a prisoner of war. She is still waiting for the Gray army. She is now a school teacher, and her mother is still a widow.

Westerling, the cynic and drear, heart-pulling suspense. All the good times, the sweetly companionable times, she and Lanny had had together; all his flashes of courtship, his outburst in their last interview in the arbor, when she had told him that if she found that she wanted to come to him she would come in a flame, passed in review under the hard light of her petty ironies and sarcasms, which had the false ring of coquetry to her now, genuine as they had been at the time. Through her varying moods she had really loved him, and the thing that had slumbered in her became the drier fuel for the flame—perhaps too late.

"Without him—what then? It seemed that the fatality that had let him escape miraculously from the aeroplane accident, made him chief of staff, and brought him victory, might well choose to ring down the curtain of destiny for him in the charge that drove the last foot of the invader off the soil of the Browns. . . . A voice was calling. . . . She heard it happily, with a sudden access of giddy fear, before it became a cheerful, clarion cry that seemed to be repeating a message that had already been spoken without her understanding it.

"He's safe, safe, safe, Miss Galland! He was not hit! He is on his way back and ought to be here very soon!" She heard herself saying "Thank you!" But that was not for some time. The aide was already gone. He had had his thanks in the effect of the news, which made him think that a chief of staff should not receive congratulations for victory alone.

Lanny would return through the garden. She remained leaning against the wagon body, still faint from happiness, waiting for him. She was drawing deeper and longer breaths that were velvety with the glow of sunshine. A flame, the flame that Lanny had desired, of many gentle yet passionate tongues, leaping hither and thither in glad freedom, was in possession of her being. When his figure appeared out of the darkness the flame swept her to her feet and toward him. Though he might reject her he should know that she loved him; this glad thing, after all the shame she had endured, she could confess triumphantly.

But she stopped short under the whip of conscience. Where was her courage? Where her sense of duty? What right had she, who had played such a horrible part, to think of self? There were other sweethearts with lovers alive who might be dead on the morrow if war continued. The flame sank to a live coal in her secret heart. Another passion possessed her as she seized Lannan's hand in both her own.

"Lanny, listen! Not the sound of a shot—for the first time since the war began! Oh, the blessed silence! It's peace, peace—can't it be to peace?" As they ascended the steps she was pouring out a flood of broken, feverish sentences which permitted of no interruption. "You kept on fighting today, but you won't tomorrow, will you? It isn't I who plead—it's the women, more women than there are men in the army, who want you to stop now! Can't you hear them? Can't you see them?"

In the fervor of appeal, before she realized his purpose, they were on the veranda and at the door of the dining-room, where the Brown staff was gathered around the table. "I still rely on you to help me, Marta," he whispered as he stood to one side for her to enter.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Last Shot.

"Miss Galland!" Blinking as she came out of the darkness into the bright light, with a look of her dew-sprinkled dark hair free and brushing her flushed cheek Marta saw the division chiefs of the Browns, after their start when Lannan spoke her name, all stand at the salute, looking at her rather than at him. The reality in the flesh of the woman who had been a comrade in service, sacrificing her sensibilities for their cause, appealed to them as a true likeness of their conceptions of her. In their eyes she might read the finest thing that can pass from man to woman or from man to man's.

These were the strong men of her people who had driven the burglar from her house with the sword of justice. Their tribute had the steadfast loyalty of soldiers who were craving to do anything in the world that she might ask, whether to go on their knees to her or to kill dragons for her. "I may come in?" she asked. "Who if not you is entitled to the privilege of the staff council?" exclaimed the vice-chief.

The others did not propose to let him do all the honors. Each murmured words of welcome on his own account. "We are here, thanks to you!" "And, thanks to you, our flag will float over the Gray range!"

She must be tired, was their next thought. Four or five of them hurried to place a chair for her, the vice-chief winning over his rivals, more through the exercise of the rights of rank than by any superior alacrity.

"You are appointed actual chief of staff and a field marshal!" said the vice-chief to Lannan. "The premier says that every honor the nation can bestow is yours. The capital is mad. The crowds are crying: 'On to the Gray capital! Tomorrow is to be a public holiday and they are calling Lannan Day. The thing was so sudden that the speculators who depressed our securities in the world's markets have got their due—ruin! And we ought to get an indemnity that will pay the cost of the war!'"

Seated at one side, Marta could watch all that passed, herself unobserved. She noted a touch of color come to Lannan's cheeks as he made a little shrug of protest.

Then she saw their faces grow businesslike and keen, as they gathered around the table, with Lannan at the head. They were oblivious of her presence, immersed in a man's world of war.

"Your orders were obeyed. We have not passed a single white post yet!" said the vice-chief impatiently. "As the Grays never expected to take the defensive, their fortresses are in inferior. Every hour we wait means more time for them to fortify, more time to recover from their demoralization. Our dirigibles having command of the air—we had a wireless from one reporting all clear half-way to the Gray capital—why, we shall know their concentrations while they are ignorant of ours. It's the nation's great opportunity to gain enough provinces to even the balance of population with the Grays. With the unremitting offensive, blow on blow, using the spirit of our men to drive in mass attacks at the right points, the Gray range is ours!"

Marta scanned the faces of the staff for some sign of dissent only to find nothing but the ardor of victory calling for more victory, which reflected the feeling of the couraging crowds in the capital. Though Lanny wished to stop the war, he was only a chip on the crest of a wave. Public opinion, which had made him an idol, would discard him as soon as he ceased to be a hero in the likeness of its desires. She saw him aloof as the others, in preoccupation, bent over the map outlining the plan of attack that they had worked out while awaiting their chief's return from the charge. He was taking a paper from his pocket and looking from one to another of his colleagues studiously; and she was conscious of that determination in his smile which she had first seen when he rose from the wreck of his plane.

"This is from Partow: a message for you and the nation!" he announced, as he spread a few thin, typewritten pages out on the table. "I was under promise never to reveal its contents unless our army drove the Grays back across the frontier. The original is in the staff vaults. I have carried this copy with me."

At the mention in an arresting tone of that name of the dead chief, to which the day's events had given the prestige of one of the heroes of old, there was grave attention.

"I think we have practically agreed that the two individuals who were invaluable to our cause were Partow and Miss Galland," Lannan remarked tentatively. He waited for a reply. It was apparent that he was laying a foundation before he went any further.

There was barely standing room left at the confirmation exercises held at Emanuel's Evangelical church last Sunday. There were twelve children confirmed.

A son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Richmond on March 29.

Mr. F. A. and F. H. Weidner attended the funeral of Mr. R. D'Angelo of Toledo. He was the husband of Mrs. Ella Weidner D'Angelo.

Little Marie Schaefer was quite badly hurt when her brother Harold accidentally hit her on the head with a bat. At this writing she is improving.

THE ANNUAL EASTER BAZAAR will be held at the Hammond's Corner church Saturday afternoon and evening. The usual number of fancy articles, home-made candies and cakes will be on sale. One feature of the bazaar will be a parcel post sale. Ice cream will be served.

Mrs. D. B. Shaw who suffered a stroke of apoplexy last Sunday morning, is slowly improving. Her sister, Mrs. Graham, of Bennett's Corners, has been with her.

Mrs. Miller Hackett and children of Tiffin are spending the Easter holidays with Mrs. Hackett's parents and other relatives in Bath.

Mr. and Mrs. Eberly of Beach City spent the week-end with Mr. and Mrs. Milton Miller and Mrs. James Miller.

Mrs. Melissa Boughton has been ill for the past few weeks.

Miss Lilly Davis of Akron, will spend the Easter vacation with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Sprankle.

Mrs. Ward of Richfield is visiting at the home of Constant Shaw.

The L. A. S. held an all-day meeting at the Bath church parlors, Thursday.

Mrs. James Miller left Sunday for Barborton to visit with friends over Easter.

The following persons were entertained at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Low, March 28; Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Wilson, Mrs. Lucy Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Grant Low, Mr. and Mrs. Archie Black, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Young and family, Mrs. Richmond Shaw and family.

Ten new members of the K. O. T. M. went to a banquet at Cleveland last Tuesday evening. Wilbur Charlton took them to Brooklyn.

Edwin Kinch, who is very seriously ill, is slightly better. Two specialists from Cleveland visited his Sunday.

Esther Van Deusen is visiting her sister, Mrs. Wm. White at Peninsula.

Andrew McCreery visited his parents at Hudson last Saturday and Sunday.

Mrs. Anna Shook was in Cleveland one day last week on business.

Mrs. D. A. Towalee of St. Clairville is visiting her daughter, Mrs. C. A. VanDeusen.

VALLEY CITY

Mr. George Rolling spent Tuesday at Cleveland.

Mr. Albert Mallert has been confined to his bed with la grippe.

Mr. Chas. Dietrick and family entertained company Sunday.

Mr. Joe Degnan of Erhart has been all smiles the past week. Do you know the reason? The stork left a baby girl at his home Monday.

Dr. A. G. Appleby's mother is quite ill.

Mr. Striedt and Mr. Uhl of Cleveland were guests of Mr. Jos. Ames on Sunday.

Mr. August Reutter went to Cleveland last week Thursday on business.

Miss Hester Smith of Williamsfield, O., was on over Sunday guest of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Troxel.

A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Klooz of Garrettsville, O., on March 21. Mrs. George Zacharias, the latter's mother, is caring for her.

Miss Edith Wolfe and Miss Lillian Warner have returned to Kent Normal to resume their work after their Easter vacation.

Mrs. Henry Gunkleman has been very sick the past week with a severe attack of pleurisy.

Mr. Frank and Fred Armbruster attended the funeral of their aunt, Mrs. Saddler of Wood county.

Mr. Wallace Ogilvy of Berea was a caller in town Sunday.

Miss Ruth Stoskopf is very ill with bronchitis and measles.

The remains of Miss Emma Morgan of Oberlin were brought here for burial at Hardscrabble cemetery on Mar. 25. She formerly was a school teacher here.

Mr. Frank Hudson and family have moved into the house formerly occupied by George Mack.

Mr. Arthur Gienke is on the sick list.

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MEDINA, OHIO.

Adelbert Ruple of near Granger, contest conducted by Sears Roebuck Co. The picture was entitled "An Icicle," and was taken on the W. W. Bolles' farm.



Marta Sank Down Weakly.

"Certainly!" said the vice-chief.

"And you!" put in another officer, which brought a chorus of assent.

"No, not I—only these two!" Lannan replied. "Or, I, too, if you prefer. It little matters. The thing is that I am under a promise to both which I shall respect. He organized and labored for the same purpose that she played the spy. When we sent the troops forward in a counter-attack and pursuit to clear our soil of the Grays; when I stopped them at the frontier—both were according to Partow's plan. He had a plan and a dream, this wonderful old man who made us all seem primary pupils in the art of war."

Could it be that terrible Partow, a stroke of whose pencil had made the Galland house an inferno? Marta wondered as Lannan read his message—the message out of the real heart of the man, throbbing with the power of his great brain. His plan was to hold the Grays to stalemate; to force them to desist after they had battered their battalions to pieces against the Brown fortifications. His dream was the thing that had happened—that an opportunity would come to pursue a broken machine in a bold stroke of the offensive.

"I would want to be a hero of our people for only one aim, to be able to stop our army at the frontier," he had written. "Then they might drive me forth heaped with obloquy, if they chose. I should like to see the Grays demoralized, beaten, ready to sue for peace, the better to prove my point that we should ask only for what is ours and that our strength was only for the purpose of holding what is ours. Then we should lay up no legacy of revenge in their hearts. They could never have cause to attack again. Civilization would have advanced another step."

Lannan continued to read to the amazed staff, for Partow's message had looked far into the future. Then there was a P. S. written after the war had begun, on the evening of the day that Marta had gone from tea on the veranda with Westerling to the telephone, in the impulse of her new vision.

Yes—Many People have told us the same story—distress after eating, gases, heartburn. A Rexall Dyspepsia Tablet before and after each meal will relieve you. Sold only by us—25c.

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